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PERSONAL DECORATION ENCOURAGING MURDER.

OME vagaries and vanities of fashion have been responsible for the slaughter of more of our American birds than the charm of personal decoration has made amends for. Not only are our birds of song and of attractive plumage killed for the home market, but the belles of

Paris, London and Berlin must be supplied with robins, orioles and blue birds for their hats, humming birds for throat ornaments, blackbirds and yellow birds for fans—almost any kind of bird that simple folk better prize alive than dead for the sweetness of their music or the beauty of their forms. New York's wholesale milliners procure the killing of 5,000 to 10,000 birds a day, not one of which is that chattering and quarrelsome little nuisance, the English sparrow. A southern village reports a shipment of 80,000 slaughtered song birds in one summer—trapped, shot and poisoned—and a woman has sent to Paris from a town in Maryland 50,000 birds in a single season, most of them orioles. There are some parts of the United States where the flash of bright colors and the rippling notes of birds are no longer seen and heard. The large yards and parks of our cities used to invite the robin and the oriole, but seldom is other bird seen there now than the sparrow.

It is to the women of this and other lands that this senseless and cruel slaughter is due. Instead of placing a premium on beauty they put a ban upon it, that it may be rendered subservient to their own. That which is intrinsically beautiful ceases to be so when it is misplaced, and the birds that delight us with their color and their song when flitting across our hill-side pastures, or through the aisles of our fragrant, echoing woods, fill us with a sense of pain when we see a bunch of them stiffly wired together, staring vacantly through glass eyes, and used to make some fashionable puppet conspicuous in the streets. There never was a personal decoration so misplaced, so tasteless, so morally repugnant as this of dead birds, and it is gratifying to know that the better cultured and gentler natured people of this country are moving to put a stop to it. The Audubon Society has been organized for that purpose, and though there are many women who, in addition to beads, ribbons and artificial flowers, will demand dead birds for their personal adornment, it may be hoped that the slaughter will be so much less than that of preceding years, that we shall once more hear the familiar wood notes and see the welcome flutter of bright wings in our country districts.

If our legislators had as much of taste as of political acumen they would help this movement by subjecting the murderers of song birds to a fine, and by imposing an export duty on the bodies of our warblers.

JAPANESE LACQUERED CABINET WORK.

AS all the world knows, the Japanese are ahead in lacquering, both in the preparations of dyes with which to tinge that purest of all resins—lac, and in manipulating it so as to form relief, flat and incised figures, its highest artistic application. Western artists have scarcely got beyond using lac as a mere varnish, by a solution of the gum in alcohol and grinding any colors to be mixed with it in alcohol and spirits of turpentine. The Japanese, too, have other varnishes, and varnishes with surprising properties and unapproachable tints. Certain of these applied to metal are not to be distinguished from it, whether the ground be highly polished or a dead surface. Whether used in solid form, as an enamel, a paint or varnish, the results are marvellous. The densest ebony hue is produced, possibly relieved on laurel and olive green grounds. The designs, varied, lively and in the strictest sense picturesque, altogether free from wearisome uniformity, pure and brilliant, the product of an exhaustless imagination, are the results of assiduous labor, a series of infinitesimal thin coats of varnish being laid on and immediately wiped off with tissue paper, leaving an all but invisible residue.

On boxes with double lids, on trays, caskets, porcelain vases, carved wood stands, miniature chests and covers, secretaries, table tops, the surface glows with rich and pure colors, or with gold intensified in lustre by the lacquered treatment, from birds and insects, or merely their feathers and wings, landscapes, trees,

leaves and flowers, to mythologic and other fanciful figures. Nothing comes amiss for lacquering so long as it has a hard surface, whether an antique tea urn, a plateau, a quatre foil saucer, a spinning wheel, or a glove box. Fewer specimens of high art work in this line reach this country and Europe than is surmised. It may be doubted whether much of the so-called relief lacquer work of the shops has any real lac in it, the figures being apparently merely cast in whiting, by means of a mold, and then varnished. The art has manifestly many secrets, which the Japanese are not either supposed to reveal or which have not been sought after. An adaptation of their processes to European styles of ornament would certainly be an acquisition, especially in the line of cabinet work.

A NOVEL SORT OF DECORATION.

M R. ANDREW W. FUER, of the famous Leadenhall Press, in London, has been riding a hobby of his through the public prints: a hobby for the collection of copper plates, engraved or etched. When he gets them he fills their lines with ink, as if for printing, and after the ink has dried the brilliant surface is coated with a transparent, resinous varnish that hardens like glass, and not only preserves the inked design but maintains the lustre of the uncut surface of the metal and prevents its oxidation. Some of the plates he frames, together with prints from them, but others he employs in the decoration of furniture. Thus we might find a discarded plate of Appian's doing service on the door of a cabinet, or a piece of copper scratched by Martial set as a panel in a sideboard. Most etchers break up or deface their plates after they have printed from them what they believe to be as many impressions as the plate will give off cleanly, and unless they had guarantee of a collector's honesty they would be loath to part with plates that might be put to an ill use in supplying the cheaper shops with inferior examples of their work. The copper plate method of decoration is hardly destined to rise to the dignity of a custom.



DESIGN FOR MUSIC ROOM IN STAINED GLASS, BY SAMUEL WEST, BOSTON.